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## THE USE OF THE OE-DIPHTHONG IN PLAUTUS

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In connection with my Doctor's dissertation, in which the status of the *ei*-readings in the Plautine MSS was examined, the late Professor Minton Warren had originally suggested that I undertake a similar study of the *oe*-diphthong. The purpose of this paper is to carry out that suggestion.

First let me define the three categories in which the *oe*-diphthong may be considered:

I. Words in which the *oe*-diphthong was never reduced to *ū*. If a reduction ever took place, it was not to *ū* but to *ē*, and the change was generally confined to Low Latin or Romance; cf. Ital. *pena* < *poena*; Span. *hedo* < *foedus*, "filthy."

In this category are native Latin words containing *oe* for original I.-E. *oi*-diphthong, *amoenus*, *coenum* (but cf. Walde *Lat. et. Wörterbuch*, s. v. "*caenum*"), *foetor*, *foetidus*, *foedus* "filthy," *foedus* "treaty," *moenia*, *proelium*, *oiei*; words containing an *oe*-diphthong produced by contraction, *Cloelius*, *coepi*, *coetus*, *oboedio*; Greek loan-words in which the *oe* is the transcription of *oi* or *φ*, *poena*, *comoedia*.

II. Words in which it stands for I.-E. *oi*, and in which in Classical Latin it was reduced to *ū*, as *mūnus*, *mūnera*, *mūnio*, \**mūne*, *mūniceps*, *mūnicipium*, *commūnis*, *inmūnis*, *mūrus*, *mūto*, *mūtuus*, *spūma*, *ūtor*, etc., *cūnae*, *cūnio*, *cūro*, *cūra*, etc., *lūdus*, *lūdo*, etc., *plūres*, *plūrumi*; *pūnio*, *pūnicus*, *pūniceus*, and probably *hūius*, *cūius*,<sup>1</sup> etc. For convenience and clearness I give uniformly *ū* for the earlier *oe*. Obviously the discussion of this category will be the most important part of my paper.

III. Loan-words from the Greek, in which *oe* is explained as the transcription of *υ*, as *Antamoenides*, *lagoena*. For further examples see Schuchardt *Vokalismus*, II. 278 ff.

The first category requires no further treatment in this paper, and the third, in my opinion, can best be understood after a full

<sup>1</sup> I. e., if the development be *hoiūs* > *hūiūs*, *quoiūs* (pronounced *coiūs*) > *cūiūs*.

discussion of the second; consequently I begin by citing those instances in which the MSS of Plautus give or point to the archaic *oe* for the classical *ū*.

*Bacch.* 926: *moenitum*.

*Capt.* 254: *circummoeniti*.

*Cist.* 540: *admoenivi*.

*Pers.* 554: *moenitum* (*munitum* A, *monitum* P).

559: *moenita muro* A, P n. 1.

*Poen.* 990, 991: *Punice . . . Poenus Poenior, Poenior Bothe, punior libri*.

*Pseud.* 229: *Phoenicium poeniceo*.

384: *admoenire*.

585*b*: *admoenire* (a quotation of 384).

*Stich.* 695: *moenia* (= *munera*).

*Trin.* 24: *inmoenest, immunest* A, *In menest* P.

*Truc.* 102: *oenus* B, *unus* CD.

Morphologically *noenum*, *Aul.* 67, *Bacch.* xxiii ? (Goetz and Schoell) belongs here, but it was used only as an archaic form, and is therefore in a class by itself; *vid.* Walde s. v. "*nōn*." For some conjectural *oe*-readings see the Triumvirate edition *Mil.* 223, 228, *Rud.* 934, *Truc.* 2. *Rud.* 692 *moenia* BCD, which Schoell changes to *moeniam*, is hardly worth considering.

The reduction of *oe* to *ū* is generally regarded as having taken place in the course of the second century B. C.; so Sommer *Handbuch*, p. 88. Lindsay *LL.*, p. 240, puts it as far back as the beginning of the century, and I feel confident that even he did not date the change too early. Probably the earliest epigraphic evidence for the change is found in *utier* of *CIL* I. 33:

Quei apice insigne Dialis flaminis gesistei,  
Mors perfecit tua ut essent omnia brevia,  
Honos fama virtusque gloria atque ingenium,  
Quibus sei in longa licuisset tibe utier vita,  
Facile facteis superases gloriam maiorum;  
Qua re lubens te in gremiu, Scipio, recipit  
Terra, Publi, prognatum Publio, Corneli.

5

This P. Cornelius Scipio has not been certainly identified. Mommsen puts the close of his life anywhere from 204 to 154, and on account of such linguistic peculiarities as the lack of *-d* in the ablative and the reduction of *oe* to *ū* in *utier* 4, scholars have

been inclined to favor a later rather than an earlier date. However, after the reading of *in agro Teurano*, postscript to the SC de Bacchanalibus *CIL* I. 196, of 186 B. C., and the discovery of the decree of Aemilius Paulus, *CIL* II. 5041, of 189 B. C., the ablative *-d* no longer returns to plague us in Plautus, and inasmuch as in every other respect also the orthography of this Scipio inscription agrees with that of Plautus, e. g., the differentiation of *ī* in *insigne* 1, *vita* 4, *Publi* . . . *Corneli* 7, from the *ei*-diphthong in *quei* 1, *gesistei* 1, *sei* 4, *tibe* 4, *facteis* 5, the failure to use double consonants in *gesistei* 1, *licuiset* 4, *superases* 5 (cf. *essent* 2, *terra* 7), it will probably be correct to regard the spelling *utier* as part of the evidence for the reduction of *oe* to *ū* at an earlier date than commonly supposed.<sup>1</sup> Even if a later date is insisted on for the inscription, it should be borne in mind that as orthography always lags behind, generally far behind, changes in pronunciation—this being especially true of the Scipio *elogia*—there is still nothing in this inscription to disprove the view that the *oe*-diphthong had already been monophthongized to *ū* in the times of Plautus. Indeed, I hope to present some evidence in favor of the view that it had been reduced at least as early as the earliest of his datable plays—the *Miles Gloriosus*, which was brought out shortly after 206 B. C. But before presenting this additional evidence, let me consider two passages that seem to point to a contrary conclusion—*Pseud.* 229:

*Cras Phoenicium poeniceo corio invises pergulam.*

The date of the *Pseudolus* is 191. The classical form of *poeniceus* is *pūniceus*, and the latter orthography might be expected for Plautus, if the statement of Lindsay above referred to be correct. But in the present passage the diphthong has probably not been reduced, and that *poeniceo* should be read here is indisputable. At first sight this passage would seem to prove that the pronunciation as well as the orthography would be *poeniceus*,

<sup>1</sup>On the assumption that both *oi* and *ou* in the SC. de Bacch. are archaisms standing for an actual pronunciation *ū*, it would be possible to regard PLOVS (which occurs three times) as a mistaken restoration for \**plois* \**ploes* (cf. *couro* for *coero*, *CIL* I. 1419) and so bring it into line with PLOIRVME, *CIL* I. 32, and *ploeres*, Cic. *De leg.* iii. 3. 6.

*poenicus*, *poenio*, *moenio*, *commoenis*, *oenus*, etc. It has been brought out by L. Buchhold<sup>1</sup> that paromoeosis was at its height in Plautus and Ennius and that this practice has given us much evidence regarding pronunciation and orthography in our author. Yet in his fondness for punning Plautus sometimes even went so far as to use exceptional or archaic forms; cf. *Capt.* 67:

iudices iustissumi  
*domi duellique duellatores optumi.*

Here *duelli* and likewise *duellatores* were archaisms even for the time of Plautus; *duelli* isn't even found in a single MS for this passage. Yet Plautus' fondness for like sounds leaves no doubt as to the reading. So *Amph.* 1058:

*corrupta sum atque apsumpta sum,*

where I believe Fleckeisen is perfectly correct in reading *corrupta* against *corrupta* of the MSS. *Mil.* 1407:

*dispennite hominem divorsum et distennite.*

Here the reading *dispennite* reported by Nonius for *dispendite* carries with it the change of *distendite* of the MSS to *distennite*. So in Ennius *Epig.* ii (*CPL*, Ennius *Sat.* 1. 66) we should probably read with Bergk:

Nemo me *dacrumis decoret* nec funera fletu  
faxit.

We must not then close our eyes to the possibility that *poeniceo* in *Pseud.* 229 may have been given an archaic pronunciation by Plautus for the sake of closer similarity to *Phoenicium*.

The other passage is *Poen.* 990, 991:

Nullus me est hodie *Poenus Poenior*.

*Poenior* is the correction of Bothe; the MSS read *punior*. *Poenior* would seem to point to *poenio*, *poenicus*, etc., but here, as in the passage from *Pseud.*, the form is shown to be exceptional, being in fact a coinage for the nonce, and standing therefore altogether by itself.

<sup>1</sup> *De paromoeoseos (allitterationis) apud veteres Romanorum poetas usu*, Lips. 1883; cf. E. B. T. Spencer *Adnominatio in the Plays of Plautus with Special Reference to Questions of Pronunciation and Orthography*, Rome, 1906. Unfortunately Mr. Spencer's investigation leaves much to be desired.

Plautus has left us no statement regarding his orthography of *oe-ū* as he has about his use of *ei-ī*. Cf. *Rud.* 1305, 1306; *Truc.* 262-64. The evidence for his pronunciation of *oe* must be gathered principally from instances of assonance, the most important being *Mil.* 324:

*Sc.* abi, ludis me, Palaestrio.

*Pa.* tum mihi sunt manus inquinatae. *Sc.* quidum? *Pa.* quia  
*ludo luto.*

This is one of a great many instances where Plautus puns a long with a short vowel and I cite the following:

*Amph.* 1: Ut vōs in vostris voltis; cf. 1006.

318: exossatum ōs; cf. 342.

498: uxore ūsuraria.

*As.* 142: pāne in pannis.

568: fideli infidus.

*Bacch.* 362: crucisalum me ex Chrȳsalo (= crūsalo); cf. 687.

490: mālīs mālīm modis.

*Merc.* 83: āmens amansque.

161: ā portu apporto; cf. *Ep.* 595; *Mil.* 316; *Rud.* 1225.

It may be noted that generally (but not always) when Plautus puns a long and a short vowel *in arsi*, there is a double consonant or its equivalent after the short vowel. *In thesi* he is freer in his treatment both of sounds and of quantities. This passage from *Mil.* 324 is not conclusive for the identity of the quality of the sounds compared until confirmed by other evidence, and this is found in *Bacch.* 129:

Non omnis aetas, *Lyde*, *ludo* convenit

a passage that, as far as the quality of the sounds compared is concerned, is to be grouped with

*Bacch.* 362: Crucisalum me ex Chrysalo,

687: in cruciatum Chrysalum,

1183: Chrysalus . . . . exeruciem.

Together they prove that at this period Greek *υ* was represented in Latin by *u*, so that in 129 the sounds compared are both *in arsi* and identical in both quality and quantity, and would be repre-

sented phonetically by *Lūde*, *lūdo*, and etymologically by *Lūde loedo*. In other words, the sound of the *oe* (< *oi*) in *loedo* (> *lūdo*) had been reduced to *ū*. I cannot here agree with Lindsay *LL*, p. 248, who separates *Bacch.* 129 from *Bacch.* 362, 687, 1183, and would represent the phonetics of *Lyde*, *ludo* by *Lūde*, *lūdo*. I hold therefore that in *Mil.* 325 the pronunciation is faithfully represented by *lūdo*, *luto* and in *Bacch.* 129 by *Lūde*, *lūdo*.

Hoffmann, in *BB XXVI.* 137ff., denies the possibility of *lūdus*, *lūdo* ever having come from the I.-E. stem *loid-* (cf. v. Grienberger *Wiener Sitzungsber.* CXLII. VIII. 151), which he says could have resulted only in *leid-* > *līd*. To make good his contention he finds it necessary to treat the epigraphic evidence for *loed* (*loid*) as of no value, and the instances of its occurrence as pseudo-archaisms, interdependent in error. Accordingly he takes *lūdo* from an I.-E. stem \**ǵhleu-d-*, cf. *χλευ-άζω*. If the conclusions of Hoffmann and v. Grienberger are correct, then the puns *ludo luto*, *Lyde ludo* have no bearing on the question of the *oe*-diphthong in Plautus. Had they known of these puns they would probably have treated them as confirmatory of their own conclusions (and to complete their case they would only have been obliged to disprove the original *oi*-diphthong in *ūtor*, *cūro*, etc., as well).

But the conclusions of Hoffmann are to be rejected for the following reasons:

a) His objection to the phonetics *loid-* > *lūd-* is not valid; cf. Walde, s. v. "*ludo*;" Sommer, pp. 88, 91; and I am not aware that Lindsay has changed his view of the etymology of *lūdo* given in *Lat. Lang.* 248. Furthermore, if the stem \**leub-* (*ἐλεύθερος*) gives \**loub-* > *loib-* > *leib-* > *lib-*, why should not according to Hoffmann (since in his argument he ignores the labial as a factor in this development) \**ǵhleu-d* give *loud-* > *loid-* > *leid-* > *līd-*?

b) To deny the development of *lūdo* from *loido*, is to exclude all possible connection of these words with Osc. *luisarifs*: cf. Buck *Gram. of Osc. and Umbr.*, art. 138 and p. 248, No. 21.

If the reduction of *oi* to *ū* was already an accomplished fact in the time of Plautus in *lūdo*, it is reasonable to suppose that the reduction had become uniform throughout this whole category; and *Amph.* 498 *ūxore ūsuraria* seems to confirm this view, as

this phrase was probably pronounced *ũssor(e) ũssuraria*.<sup>1</sup> *Trin.* 181, 182:

Neque adeo hasce emi mihi nec *ũssuræ* meae:  
Illi redemi *rũssum*

is of doubtful value on account of the distance of *ussuræ* and *russum* from each other. Here may be quoted *Most.* 209:

*Cũr* obsecro non *cũrem*?

and *Poen.* 354:

*Qur* ego id *curem*? nam qui istaec magis meast *curatio*?

as reasonably sure proof of the reduction of *oe* to *ũ* in *cũro*, etc. The value of the two quotations is not impaired by the fact that *cũr* does not contain I.-E. *ũ* (yet cf. J. Schmidt *KZ* XXXII. 405, and Persson *IF* II. 248), or by the fact that the orthography in the time of Plautus may have been *quor*. The latter form, however, rests only on the express testimony of Velius Longus *GL* VII. 77. 9K, and lacks epigraphic confirmation under the Republic, whereas in *CIL* I. 1454. 1 (time of the Gracchi) we have *QUR* = *cũr*. Etymologically the quality of the *u* in *cũr* is the same as in *fũr*; cf. Gk. *φóρ*, and Lorenz' note on *fũrinum* . . . *forum*, *Pseud.* 790. Quintilian i. 7. 26 (cf. i. 4. 10, 11) has told us that by the teachers of his boyhood *seruus*, *ceruus*, etc., were still spelled *seruos*, *ceruos*, in order that the gemination of the *u* might not cause them to be pronounced *serũs cerũs*. *Cũr* was probably pronounced in the same way in the time of Plautus as in the time of Augustus, and nothing was to be feared from the simplified spelling of *quor* > *quur* > *qũr* or *cũr*. The spelling *quor* cited by Velius Longus and used by Varro was etymological, and conservative, and theoretical, and not representative of its pronunciation, which was *cũr* even for the time of Pl. Here might be quoted Velius Longus *GL* VII. 58. 4K, to the effect that words like *primitiuus*, though spelled *-uos* until in the eighth century of the city, were pronounced *-uus* and not *-uos*. Combining this fact with Bersu *Die Gutturalen*, p. 53, where, on the basis of such spellings as *OQUOLTOD* (= *occultod*) *CIL* I. 196, of 186 B. C. and

<sup>1</sup>For the weakened pronunciation of *x* to *ss* cf. the MSS in *Ep.* 248; *Rud.* 729; *Stich.* 163, 175, 272; *Truc.* 913, 940; *Pseud.* 1107 *luxantur*, *lustrantur*. Nonius 40, 24 M, and the development of *x* in Romance.



*quom* (= prep. *cum*) *CIL* I. 34. 3, end of the sixth century of the city, he proves that in Republican Latin labialized gutturals before *u* (<*o*) were unknown, we have still further proof that *quor* was pronounced *cūr* even by Plautus. Cf. Lindsay *LL* iv. 137. 3, p. 300.

The instances in Plautus in which an original *u*-sound is punned with an original *oi*-diphthong are unfortunately not more numerous than those already cited, unless we include here the very attractive interpretation of *Aul.* 562 f. by Prescott in *C. P.* II, 335 f., which is possible only on the hypothesis that *coera* had already been reduced to *cūra*.

Above has been presented the evidence for believing that the *oe* (*oi*) which we find monophthongized to *ū* in Classical Latin had already under Plautus been thus reduced in pronunciation. Admittedly the evidence is inconclusive, but the hypothesis has the virtue of explaining the phenomena met with in a more satisfactory way than the opposite view put forth, e. g., by Brugmann *KVG* I, p. 84, where he says, "*oe* galt zur Zeit des Plautus." Here he means pronunciation as well as spelling. Whether the Romans were swift enough innovators in spelling reform to have made the change in orthography also is doubtful, but I should be inclined to use the orthography *punio*, *munio*, *communis*, *plures*, *curo*, *utor* except where there seem to be special reasons for doing the contrary.

The instances cited on pp. 2 ff. may be considered individually. Whenever any of them are rejected, it is only their diphthongal pronunciation that is denied. *Noenum*, *Aul.* 67, *Bacch.* xxiii; *Poenus Poenior*, *Poen.* 991; *Phoenicium poeniceo*, *Pseud.* 229, may be accepted for reasons previously stated. In addition to these there is much to be said for Fleckeisen's *moenit* (before *moenia*) *Mil.* 228, both because of the assonance and because of the dignified nature of the passage. There is less to be said for his *moeni* 223, as there is no assonance there. In the remaining passages, where the MSS give *oe* for *'ū*, they should not be followed except for special or additional reasons, and it must be admitted that these special or additional reasons are likely to be more or less subjective: e. g., *moenitum*, *Bacch.* 926, stands in a

passage that has a heroic tone and might gain in impressiveness by the diphthongal pronunciation. The same reasons could be adduced for *Cist.* 540; *Pers.* 554, 559; *Pseud.* 384, 585*a* (=384). However, it seems unreasonable that we should read *moenitum* in *Pers.* 554, and *moenita* 559, unless we extend the *oe* also to *muro* 559, and emend *munitum muro* to *moenitum moero* 553, and *murus* to *moerus* 560. The Triumvirate editors have admitted *commoenibo* against the MSS in *Rud.* 934. Their reading of *moeris* for *vostris*, *Truc.* 2, is not felicitous. No special reason seems to exist for *circummoeniti*, *Capt.* 254, *moenia* (=munera), *Stich.* 695, *inmoene*, *Trin.* 24, *oenus*, *Truc.* 102.

I now come to the consideration of the readings of category III, namely, those in which *oe* is said to be the transcription of Greek *υ*: *lagoenam*, *Curc.* 78;<sup>1</sup> *Antamoenides*, *Poen.* cast of characters. The Greek originals of these words are respectively *λάγυνος* and *Ἀνταμυνίδης*; cf. K. Schmidt in *Hermes* XXXVII. 356. The precarious position of *oe* as a transcription for *υ* may be gathered from Schuchardt's discussion of it, *Vokalismus* II. 278-87. The case for such transcription is not supported by inscriptional evidence, but rests on a few MS readings, and on the very doubtful readings in a single passage in a single grammarian—Maximus Victorinus *GL* VI. 196. 3K: "Quae sunt litterae peregrinae? y et z. Quare peregrinae? Siquidem a nobis propter Graeca nomina adsumptae sunt, ut puta *Hylas*, *zephyrus*. Quae si adsumpta non essent, *Hulas* et *sdepherus* (*sdephurus*?) diceremus." Here *hoelas* (*sic*) is given only by one MS, Goth, and by ζ, while *sdephoerus* is the conjecture of Ribbeck *RM* XII. 431. Schuchardt *loc. cit.*, argues in favor of these two readings. Ritschl *Bonner Sommerkat.* 1856 had denied that *oe* could be used as transcription for *υ*, but had admitted that it was the regular transcription for *ū*. The question of chronology, however, must be considered, and I have no hesitation in rejecting the grammarian's statement (reading

<sup>1</sup> It may be that Fleckeisen is right in reading *lagaenam* (from *λάγνος*; cf. *scaena* < *σκηνή*) making thus a better pun on *leaeenam* of the preceding line. If so, its discussion is outside the scope of this paper. But on the whole, I cannot help regarding the reading *lagaenam* as improbable on the ground of the questionable standing of *λάγνος*, and even with *lagunam* the pun is by no means a bad one.

*Hoelas* and *sdephoerus*) as applied to Plautus. For in our poet's time *υ* of Greek loan-words in Latin was pronounced *u*, as *turanus*, *sucopanta*. This is so well established as not to require proof here. Consequently if these words—*lagoenam Antamoenides*—are to stand thus in our text of Plautus, they are to be pronounced as though spelled with *ū*, or, putting the matter in another way, with the *oe* that in the time of Plautus had been monophthongized to *ū*. So it is that K. Schmidt *loc. cit.*, reads *Antamūnides*, and Vendryes *Recherches sur l'histoire et les effets de l'intensité initiale* 284 regards the form *lagoena* as a reversed form of writing *ū*.

When then did the transcription of *υ* by *oe* come into vogue? Ribbeck *JJ* LXXV. 317 holds that it came in with Accius, and in frg. 122 we find *Froegiae*. This view of Ribbeck's is disproved by Schuchardt II. 287: "Hätte Accius wirklich *oe* für *υ* eingeführt, und wäre diese Schreibung schon im 7. Jahrhundert d. St. gang und gäbe gewesen, so würde uns gewiss inschriftliche Belege derselben nicht fehlen"—a process of reasoning which, by the way, is equally fatal when turned against the conclusions of Schuchardt himself.

We are safe then in concluding that the transcription of *υ* by *oe*, if ever practiced, did not take place until imperial times, and did not affect the text of Plautus except so far as this was corrupted by having such forms as *lagoenam* and *Antamoenides* introduced into it. The fact that for Plautus' time *oe* was not used for *υ* is still further evidence against Lindsay's interpretation of the sounds *Lyde*, *ludo*, *Bacch.* 129, where he holds, *LL*, p. 248, that *ludo* still has a diphthongal pronunciation of *oe* approaching the sound of *υ* in *Lyde*.